



Foggy Bottom News

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Because of technical difficulties surrounding the production of the paper, this issue of the News was prepared in this special format. We regret we could not include the ads of the fine organizations which support this paper and the community of Foggy Bottom.

Councilmember Catania at January Meeting

At its January meeting, the first of the new year, FBA will welcome David Catania, an at-large member of the City Council and one of its two Republicans.

This is his first appearance as a featured speaker at an FBA meeting. It is scheduled for Monday, January 31, at 7:30 p.m., at the Wyndham Bristol Hotel, 2430 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.



Catania was elected in a 1997 special election, defeating several candidates including former Council Chair Arrington Dixon. Last year he was re-elected to a four-year term, and has earned a reputation for getting things done but also for ruffling feathers.

He has recently sponsored legislation to increase the influence of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions on city departments. It would require a two-thirds vote by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board and others to rule against ANC recommendations, unless the Mayor overrides it or for several other specified reasons. (At present, boards are to give ANCs "great weight," but are often seen to fail in that regard.)

At the Red Cross and GWU revenue bonds hearing, although he voted for the bond issues, prior to the vote Catania expressed strong sentiments about the process. The first vote on the GWU bond issue was to waive the rules and bring it to a vote right away; it lost until Council Chair Linda Cropp changed her vote. At that point Catania said:

"I believe we could have taken this month, which under our rules we should have, to ask GW to come to the table with the community...to try to force a compromise where both parties give, so we can take the standing armies that exist in Foggy Bottom -- I mean it is at long last time for detente on the Potomac, where the university can do its business without undue community extortion and the community can live and know with some certainty and with some appreciation about how their community is going to look in the next five years.

"And so, again, I support the bonds. I also support the community. We have a chance to have a win-win, with some certainty, to use the benefit of these bonds, to get something
(continued)

in return. Instead, we are moving this process up, we have expedited it, for trumped-up, ridiculous reasons that are silly, again, on their face, in an effort to derail community input and have the proper process be followed. So, shame on us."

Make plans to attend the meeting and hear from this outspoken, articulate official elected to represent D. C. residents on the City Council.

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DOH Refuses to Order EIS for GWU Hospital

On December 9, the city's Department of Health declined to order the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the GWU replacement hospital project. In its report to the Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs, which issues demolition and building permits, the DOH officials stated that the project "will likely not exceed the health standards for any air in the vicinity.... But there is essentially no remaining air resource margin in the 23rd Street corridor,... [which] will experience peak CO concentrations that are just below the applicable health standard."

A letter from ANC 2-A to Lloyd Jordan, head of the DCRA, indicated the Commission's concerns about the DOH study. The letter made a special point of questioning DOH's air quality assumption without any information on the future uses of the current hospital site which most certainly would alter air quality. The ANC asked that DCRA withhold construction permits until a full environmental impact statement is prepared.

FB Resident and ANC Ask Halt for Square 43

Don Kreuzer, who lives at 600 23rd Street, has asked the Mayor to prevent GWU from destroying the remaining houses in the 2300 block of Virginia Avenue, and ANC 2-A supported his position in a letter to the Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs.

Square 43 is bounded by G Street on the north, 23rd Street on the east, Virginia Avenue on the south, and 24th Street on the west. The University has purchased all the property in that block except for three houses owned by Kreuzer and the high-rise Remington on 24th Street. (One of the houses was purchased recently for \$1.7 million.)

He has also charged that GWU is currently using part of the lot for a construction staging and storage area in violation of its zoning and without proper permits.

The ANC asked the DCRA to withhold from GWU permits to demolish the houses "until the new campus plan is approved, which should include conditions covering Square 43." In mid-January workmen at the property stated they were removing gas, water and sewer equipment from the houses on Virginia Avenue.

D. C. Officials Respond to Proposed Development West of 26th

Concerned residents have received copies of memos from two D. C. department heads concerning the proposal to build a large housing development west of 26th Street between I and L Streets, N.W. This project was the subject of a number of letters printed in the December FBNews. An alternative suggestion was to use it for federal memorial sites.

Thanks to efforts by Councilmember Jack Evans and several groups of residents, Robert P. Newman, Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, recommended that the land be maintained as a

local park and for open space. The DRP suggestion was to "improve the playground...and form a partnership with neighborhood residents to improve the landscaping...." An FBA committee has met to make plans for upgrading the park and playground, using amenity funds from the Ritz Carlton project at 22nd and M Streets.

Othello Mahone, Interim Director of the Department and Community Development, wrote to Councilmember Jack Evans that his agency "has no plans to have land transferred to its control for the purpose of constructing a 1000-unit development." He indicated that no such project could proceed without comment from "the impacted community," as well as clearance from the Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration.

The proposal was put forth by Foggy Bottom resident Dale Barnhard for new housing on land currently designated open space, and by using air rights over existing roads.

BZA Upholds Decision in HoJo Case

In a split decision (3-1), the Board of Zoning Adjustment upheld the decision of the Acting Zoning Administrator approving GWU dormitory use for the former Howard Johnson. The decision had been contested in an appeal by Watergate West and joined by ANC 2-A. The appeal argued that the Zoning Administrator's ruling was inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning regulations regarding university use in residential zones, was not a rational interpretation of those regulations, and was not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the District of Columbia. A further appeal is being considered.

24th Street Bridge Closed

The rehabilitation of the 24th Street bridge at K Street was begun in December, and will continue for several months. The street has been closed between the two K Street service roads, which also are experiencing partial closings. It has resulted in increased use of New Hampshire Avenue as a route into and out of the Foggy Bottom area, as well as increasing its use by commuters. FB residents should be aware of tieups, especially in rush hour, and look for circuitous routes.

Hospital Suits Move Slowly

The FBA's suit appealing the decision of the Board of Zoning Adjustment in the GWU Hospital case has been slowed down by the delay in transmitting the record to the Court of Appeals. Reportedly, the BZA staff had set mid-January to have that task completed; it will then have to be checked for accuracy and completeness.

Meanwhile, FBA resident Dorothy Miller is challenging, on behalf of the neighborhood, the decision on the hospital by the State Health Planning & Development Agency. This appeal, before the Board of Appeals and Review, alleges that the agency violated its own rules; this appeal process is moving very slowly, adding to legal costs.

Contributions to the FBA Legal Fund will assist in the payment of legal costs, and may be sent to the FBA, c/o the West End Library, 24th & L Streets, N.W., Washington, DC 20037. They are tax-deductible.

Mt. Vernon Campus Plan Mediated

The campus plan for GWU's newly-acquired Mount Vernon College

campus came up for review last year, and in mid-December an agreement was reached using a mediation process. The new D. C. Planning Director, Andrew Altman, suggested mediation for the resolution of disputes involved in GWU's first plan for the women's college on Foxhall Road.

Important issues for the nearby neighbors were student and faculty parking on residential streets, traffic patterns including the shuttle buses from the downtown campus, and a student population limit.

The local ANC, while dropping its opposition to the campus plan following the agreement, indicated its wish, rejected by GWU, that the college be required to amend the campus plan and require zoning approval for the use of any property outside the campus boundaries. GWU's use of outside-the-campus land is a major concern of Foggy Bottom residents. GWU President Trachtenberg reported rejected any limitation on GWU's right to purchase such property.

As to the possible use of mediation for the Foggy Bottom campus plan, he claimed in The Georgetown Current that the Mount Vernon "cast of characters" was "outcome-oriented. ... Foggy Bottom has people who enjoy the process so much that they are less concerned about the outcome."

Newsham Succeeds Cockett at MPD Second District

Close upon the reassignment of officers within the Second District of the Metropolitan Police Department, Chief Ramsey promoted 2D Commander Shannon Cockett to Assistant Chief, and named Peter Newsham to succeed her. Cockett has left 2D and will head the Maurice Turner Institute of Police Science (the police training academy).

A ten-year MPD veteran, Newsham has had experience in several D. C. police districts, including service in the 5th District as head of the detectives' office. He expects to receive his law degree from the University of Maryland later this year. The new commander responded quickly to a letter from FBA President Ellie Becker complaining of the difficulty in reaching lieutenants and sergeants via their office phone, 282-0050. Newsham wrote that he will look at the communication problem, saying it is his belief "that community leaders...should be able to have timely opportunities to discuss issues with PSA officials." FBA has invited Newsham to attend the February 28 meeting at the Kennedy Center.

Dates to Note

Monday, January 31: Foggy Bottom Association meeting, with David Catania, Councilmember-at-Large, as featured speaker. Wyndham Bristol Hotel, 2430 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 2: Department of Public Works Open House on its study of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. West End Library, 24th & L Streets, N.W. 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 16: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2-A meeting. For location, call 736-1175. 7:00 p.m.

Monday, February 28: Foggy Bottom Association meeting, with a presentation by the Kennedy Center on its proposed access plan, and with Norman Dong, D. C. Deputy Mayor for Operations and City Administrator, as featured speaker. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, North Atrium. 7:30 p.m.